

# **CITY OF GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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Tuesday, January 25, 2011

**PRESENT:** ACE Members: Susan Breon, Theresa Bugg, Jon Gardner, Alla Lake, Veronica Martin-Frederick, Don Rich, Sudhanshu Sinha, Dave Whiteman, City Councilmember Leta Mach and Staff Liaison Wendy Wexler.

Minutes of November 30, 2010 were accepted as is.

## **VIJAY KOWTHA PRESENTATION.**

Vijay asked to speak to ACE and time was made at the beginning of our Agenda. He wished to speak about how things were going with the Science Café. Vijay has been doing a terrific job of involved lots of students at ERHS and bringing in very interesting speakers, including Nobel Prize winners. He arranges lots of activities including field trips. Vijay supports this entire offering completely on his own. He hosts it once a month at ERHS and once a month at Oxon Hill HS. The Café is geared at 8<sup>th</sup> graders and bringing them into the science community with the support and mentoring of the HS students presence. Vijay is concerned because he regularly has 100 students in Oxon Hill and only 40 students at ERHS.

A concern was raised that his Science Café begins prior to the GMS school day ending and that creates a conflict. ACE encouraged Vijay to make an appointment to speak directly to Principal Sharon Porter at GMS. Perhaps they could work something out once a month, making attendance at the Science Café an approved school field trip.

## **REVIEW OF PRINCIPALS MEETING.**

ACE members were very pleased with the turnout and the comfortable give-and-take of the conversations. They were glad to be able to share the outcome of the grant proposals with the principals.

One issue ACE would be interested in getting involved with is supporting greater Staff and Parent Volunteer Recognition. GES has a great format that could be shared with other schools. One suggestions was to have David Lange, long time Volunteer Coordinator at GES, speak to the PTA's at the other schools to offer suggestions. ERHS also has a "First Family" Award that seems very effective. It was suggested that ACE might contact all the PTA's via email and ask them to share how they honor parent volunteers and then share the accumulated information with all the schools.

## **ACE GRANTS PROGRAM.**

Alla represented ACE at the City Council meeting where the ACE Grants Program was discussed. All of the ACE recommended grant proposals were approved. Jon will send out email announcements to all the proposers. Wendy will begin to work on getting the checks released to the proposers.

### **ACE EDUCATOR AWARDS.**

Principals all requested a date change for this event due to the conflict with their school testing schedules. It is agreed that they would prefer Monday, March 28. Wendy will address this change with the city Administration and then send out an email confirmation and updated Selection Forms to all the Principals.

Wendy will send out information about Prep for this event to all the ACE members. At our February meeting we will determine who will be handling the hosting duties.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL TASK FORCE REPORT.**

Theresa is the ACE representative to this Task Force. This committee is working on recommendations on how best to use the remaining historic sections of the GMS, following the construction of the new facility. There will be approximately 128,000 square feet of usage. One wing is projected to be knocked down so that it might be used for school bus parking.

Leta is a strong advocate of Steny Hoyer's community School concept and says there are funds available to underwrite it. Another suggestion is allowing Turning Point Academy Charter School to have the space. They are currently looking for more space because they are quickly outgrowing what they have and they really need access to a gym. A few other ideas were also explored.

Theresa asks that all ACE members email her their formal suggestions no later than February 6<sup>th</sup>, so that she can organize them all and take them to the next meeting of the Task Force on February 10.

The County wants a final recommendation no later than June 2011.

### **MUSIC FESTIVAL.**

As we were running out of time and did not have much discussion of this, Dave just reiterated what he had stated earlier in the Principals Meeting, that this will take place in May at the Greenbelt Middle School. She is getting help with this from Darelynn Fung and Lawrence Farmer with this project.

### **MATCH COMPETITION.**

Susan is the coordinator of this new endeavor. Again, we run out of time to delve into it too much today but Susan also points to our discussion during the Principals Meeting.

This event is also scheduled to take place at the GMS and her school-based assistance is coming from the GES math teacher, Brian Weeks.

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**ACE CALENDAR – Please let Wendy know if you are NOT able to attend.**

**Unless noted all meetings will now take place in the Second Floor City Council Room, City Municipal Building.**

**2/22....Regular Monthly Meeting – 7 PM**

**3/22....Regular Monthly Meeting – 7 PM**

**\*\*\*ACE Educators Awards date still being finalized\*\*\***

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# **CITY OF GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

## **Annual Principals Meeting**

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Tuesday, January 25, 2011

### **PRESENT:**

Principals: Kimberly Seidel (GES), Natasha Jenkins (SHL ES), Phyllis Gillens (MES), Kenneth Jones (TPA), Sharon Porter (GMS), Warren Tweedy (Assistant Principal – GMS) and Reginald McNeil (ERHS).

ACE Members: Susan Breon, Theresa Bugg, Jon Gardner, Alla Lake, Veronica Martin-Frederick, Don Rich, Sudhanshu Sinha, Dave Whiteman, City Councilmember Leta Mach and Staff Liaison Wendy Wexler.

The evening began with introductions and then Jon offered an overview of some of the ongoing ACE programs. That included sharing the outcome of the ACE Grant Proposals with everyone. Other programs that were discussed were the Reading and Science Clubs, thecae Educator and Student Awards, the change of location for the Music Festival; the new planned Math Competition for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. He also informed the Principals that Greenbelt is hoping to recognize the new National Board Certified teachers each year.

During this time it became clear that the original date for the ACE Educators Awards (3/14) was a significant conflict for the schools. It occurred in the midst of the MSA Testing week. The Principals all asked that we change the date. They requested it be moved to 3/28. There did not seem to be any disagreement with that date – even Leta thought it should be okay with Council. Wendy will ask the Administration and then send out confirming emails to the Principals, along with updated Selection Forms.

Principals were asked if they thought it had become easier to request a transfer to a different school for students this year. They all agreed it was at least as rigorous – if not more so. They gave as an example the fact that even if your student has been in their home elementary school for 6 years, they had to be reexamined for residency prior to moving to the local middle school. This question originated with Ed Putens and Wendy will share the results with him.

Reginald McNeil wanted to thank SHL ES for allowing them to host ERHS Parent Meeting at the elementary school. They were doing this to assist parent who live there and have difficulty traveling to have access to school information.

When asked about school wide budget cuts, the principals listed the cutting of middle

school sports and curriculum coaches. MES stated that they used to have a budget for materials of \$200,000 and now it is only \$55,000. SHL ES asked if they could use future ACE Grants to help reward and motivate staff.

One big issue for all the schools was parental involvement. SHL ES asked if ACE could sponsor parent groups to teach parents how to help their students at home. A suggestion was made to have Parent Peer Groups that were based on the age of your student. A lot of discussion was about how to honor – and therefore encourage – parent volunteers.

ERHS pointed out that there has been a grading policy change. No longer will students be getting letter grades, they will now have number grades and as a result they will possibly have lower grades on their reports than they had previously.

When asked to talk about some “good news” at their schools, ERHS went first. Mr. McNeil offered that they now have 7 new National Board Certified Teachers. He also said they were doing very well in a state wide cooking competition which is taking place at Martins Crosswinds. Nancy Grasmick is coming to ERHS on 2/9 to honor their AP accomplishments.

At GES, Ms. Seidel says they are very pleased they have been able to get a para professional to help with the overcrowding in the third grade. She also reports they have met the State validation for Pre-K and K. Additionally; her students have really enjoyed the Ballroom Dancing Competition and received the bronze. They have one new Nationally Board Certified Teacher. She cites the fact that the County has stopped giving a financial incentive to teachers as one reason that fewer are trying.

GMS is pleased to report that all the teachers have got updated laptops and the office staff has new PC's. They are looking forward to having the elementary schools visit. They were very happy to have received \$1500 from Ingrid Turner for student recognition. And this year they have a very active PTA.

MES reported on their efforts for improved health with a “Walk for Education” for their students who walk three days a week at 8 AM – their goal is to walk “around the globe”. They now have an active walking club and also offer a healthy foods show on their in-school morning news. All their lights have been changed and are now energy efficient.

TPA reports that they participated in a walk for the homeless. They have some parent groups they are proud of.

SHL ES is also working on the Healthy Schools Initiative and are helped by \$13000 in grant money. They are working on improved on time behaviors and increasing their NBA's (never been absent). They also have one new National Board Certified teacher.